

Message Text

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12-S

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9719

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 2947

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: FATHER SINNOTT CASE

REF: SEOUL 2937

1. IN VIEW U.S. AND LOCAL PRESS INTEREST HERE IN SINNOTT CASE AND ESPECIALLY EMBASSY ROLE IN ENTIRE AFFAIR, WE SEE NEED FOR BALANCED AND FORTHCOMING PRESS COMMENT. THEREFORE PROPOSE FOLLOWING PRESS LINE FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES AND ONLY AFTER SINNOTT HAS LEFT KOREA, UNLESS OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES FORCE EARLIER STATEMENT:

2. BEGIN TEXT: FATHER JAMES SINNOTT WAS REQUESTED TO APPEAR AT INCHON IMMIGRATION OFFICE APRIL 25. IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST BY FATHER SINNOTT, AN EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER WAS PRESENT AT THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE MEETING WHEN THE INCHON IMMIGRATION OFFICE CHIEF INFORMED FATHER SINNOTT THAT HIS RESIDENCE PERMIT WOULD NOT BE EXTENDED AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE KOREA BY APRIL 30. AT FATHER SINNOTT'S SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR EMBASSY ASSISTANCE, THE EMBASSY THEN APPROACHED KOREAN GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ON HIS BEHALF TO SEEK EXTENSION OF HIS RESIDENCE PERMIT. THESE AUTHO-
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RITIES SUGGESTED TO THE EMBASSY THAT EXTENSION OF FATHER SINNOTT'S RESIDENCE PERMIT WOULD BE FACILITATED IF A REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION CONTAINED HIS AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE A WRITTEN STATEMENT PLEDGING TO OBEY KOREAN

LAWS. THE EMBASSY GAVE THIS SUGGESTION OF THE ROK
AUTHORITIES TO FATHER SINNOTT FOR HIS CONSIDERATION.
THE EMBASSY DID NOT IN ANY WAY ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE HIS
DECISION. ON APRIL 26, FATHER SINNOTT INFORMED THE
EMBASSY THAT HE FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO PLEDGE TO
OBEY KOREAN LAW. HE THANKED THE EMBASSY FOR ITS
ASSISTANCE AND MADE NO FURTHER REQUESTS FOR
ASSISTANCE. HIS RESPONSE TO THE ROKG PROPOSAL WAS
THEN TRANSMITTED BY THE EMBASSY TO ROKG OFFICIALS.
THE USG RECOGNIZES THAT THE QUESTION OF FOREIGNERS'
RESIDENCE IS COMPLETELY WITHIN THE SOVEREIGN JURISDICTION
OF THE HOST COUNTRY BUT THE USG FINDS IT DISAPPOINTING
THAT A BASIS COULD NOT BE FOUND TO RESOLVE THE
PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE CONTINUING RESIDENCE OF
FATHER SINNOTT IN KOREA. END TEXT.

3. ON BACKGROUND WE WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT
EMBASSY MERELY TRANSMITTED SUGGESTION FROM ROK
AUTHORITIES TO FATHER SINNOTT. IF ASKED ANY QUESTIONS
CONCERNING FATHER SINNOTT'S REACTION TO ROKG
SUGGESTION WE WILL REFER QUESTIONER TO FATHER SINNOTT.

4. REQUEST CONFIRMATION.
SNEIDER

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